

Implications of Refugee Resettlement Policy in Urban and Suburban Communities: A Study
of Somali People Living in Eden Prairie and Minneapolis

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Submitted under the supervision of Daniel Kelliher to the University Honors Program at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, *magna cum laude*, in Political Science.

May 13, 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Daniel Kelliher, for his encouragement in the completion of this project. I would also like to thank Fartun Abdi, of Lutheran Social Services, whose knowledge and expertise of working at a refugee resettlement agency was essential to understand in order to complete this project. I would also like to thank the Somali Student Association of the University of Minnesota for allowing to me to attend one of their meetings in order to recruit participants for this study. Additionally, I am extremely grateful to those participants who responded to my survey. Their responses and experiences were critical to understanding the Somali community in Minnesota. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family who have supported my political science education throughout the past several years. Your support has helped lead to this thesis and my graduation!

Abstract

Thousands of Somali refugees live and work in Minnesota. Somali refugees have been coming to Minnesota since the early 1990's when violence and famine erupted in Somalia. Today Minneapolis, Minnesota is home to one of the largest Somali populations outside of Somalia, and Eden Prairie, Minnesota has the largest Somali population within the suburbs of the Twin Cities. Voluntary agencies, also known as VOLAGs, contract with the U.S. government to resettle refugees across the country. What effects, if any, does the VOLAG system have on refugees? Can the refugee resettlement process be improved? How successfully do refugees integrate in America? All of these are important questions that should be answered when thousands of taxpayer dollars fund the resettlement process. Thus, it is important that we understand how to have the best resettlement program possible for taxpayers, and most importantly for the future refugees who come to the U.S. This study asks the primary research question: Can being resettled in a suburban versus urban community be advantageous to Somali refugees? In order to answer this, a professional opinion of an employee of a local resettlement agency is gathered. Additionally, census and education data of Somali residents living in Eden Prairie and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis is analyzed and compared. Also, an online survey is conducted of Somali residents of both communities to determine if there are any major differences in demographic information between the two. These results are combined to conclude that resettling refugees in suburban communities may be beneficial to refugees because there is a link between higher incomes and education levels of Somali residents living in Eden Prairie compared to the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

Keywords: refugees, Somali, resettlement policy, VOLAG, Minnesota

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Abstract	3
Thesis	
Introduction	5
Background Information	7
Resettlement Process via the VOLAG system	9
Interview with Fartun Abdi	14
Comparison between Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside	19
Survey Review	27
Limitations and Additional Factors	34
Policy Outcomes based on findings	38
Conclusion	39
Works Cited	42
Appendices	46

Implications of Refugee Resettlement Policy in Urban and Suburban Communities: A Study of Somali People Living in Eden Prairie and Minneapolis

Introduction

According to the State Department, 15,764 Somali refugees have been resettled in Minnesota since 1991 when Somali people first began fleeing their country due to violence and famine (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Today those refugees have started new lives in Minnesota with their loved ones. Somali people contribute greatly to the state of Minnesota. They own businesses, their children are enrolled in schools and universities, and they act charitably like many other Americans; essentially they have deeply rooted lives like the rest of us. The Somali community in Minnesota, and across our nation, is an integral part of our pluralist society, because of this we should critically think about the resettlement process that brings so many refugees to our country. The purpose of this study is to ask the question: Can being resettled in suburban versus urban communities be advantageous to Somali refugees? In order to answer this question I will offer a brief overview of the history of Somalia and how a refugee crisis arose there. Then I will examine the voluntary agency (VOLAG) process to gain a better understanding of how refugees are resettled in the United States and what effects the VOLAG system has, if any, on refugees. To continue my research I will also summarize my interview with Fartun Abdi. Ms. Abdi works for Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, a local resettlement agency. I interviewed Ms. Abdi to gather insight from a professional who works in the resettlement field and to ask for her professional opinion about whether she thinks resettling refugees in suburban versus urban communities could be beneficial to Somali refugees. After this I will present

education data and census data of Somali residents from Eden Prairie, MN and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. These two communities were selected because they are quite distinct in terms of income and diversity, but they both have large Somali populations. I will analyze and compare proficiency rates of math, reading, and science along with graduation and college going rates of Somali students at Eden Prairie High School and Minneapolis South High School. Additionally, demographic information such as income, educational attainment, owning a home versus renting, and car ownership will be analyzed and compared between these two communities. The results of this data will hopefully help us answer our research question. After this I will gather data of Somali residents from Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside by conducting an online survey. This survey will ask respondents questions about income, home ownership, education, English ability, pros/cons of living in their respective communities, and other factors to determine if there are any clear demographic differences between Somali residents of these two communities. Furthermore, additional factors of social capital and secondary migration are also studied to demonstrate that there are forces outside refugee resettlement policy that heavily influence the lives of Somali people in Minnesota. Finally, I will offer my conclusion that resettling refugees in a suburban community may not definitely be advantageous to future refugees, but based on the evidence of the data collected and the results of the survey, along with professional opinions, there does appear to be a link between higher incomes and education levels of Somali residents living in Eden Prairie compared to Cedar-Riverside. I then ask the important question: Should refugee resettlement policy change based on these findings? I recommend yes, future refugees should be resettled in suburban communities rather than urban ones. Somali refugees are essential members of our society

and we owe it to future refugees, and our entire nation, to have the best refugee resettlement program possible.

Background Information

To begin we must have an understanding of Somalia and why many Somali people ended up in Minnesota. Somalia is a country in northeast Africa. People have lived in the region for thousands of years and have lived a pastoral and nomadic lifestyle (Issa-Salwe, 1996). Somalia has a traditional pastoral society where governance is decentralized, decisions are based on consensus, and authority is exercised by lineage (Bradbury, 2008). Furthermore, in Somalia there exists a clan ideology. There are six clan families: Dir, Isaaq, Darod, Hawiye, Digil, and Raha nweyn. The clan is the most significant political unit in the traditional system. This clan ideology helped to create extreme characteristics of independence and individualism in Somali society (Issa-Salwe, 1996). This clan ideology can help us understand the history of conflict in Somalia.

Somalia has a long history of colonialism that led to failed government institutions and failed democratic systems. Before Somalia's independence in 1960, colonial powers divided the six clan families within Somalia. This made it very difficult to produce a single, unified government because each clan operated individually (Issa-Salwe, 1996). This colonial fragmentation has been identified as the root of the problem that has plagued the horn of Africa for many years. After years of struggle, Somalia gained independence on July 1, 1960 (Issa-Salwe, 1996). However, this was only the beginning of the violent pursuit for national unity. Somalia enjoyed a democratic, civilian government for the first nine years of independence until General Mohamed Siyad Barre instituted a military government

between 1969 and 1991 (Bradbury, 2008). On January 27, 1991 the presidential palace was overran and General Barre was overthrown. Upon the collapse of the Somali state a civil war erupted between 1991 and 1992. This time period was marked by famine, oppression, violence, and anarchy (Issa-Salwe, 1996). The civil war killed an estimated 25,000 people and the famine caused deaths of more than 300,000 people. Due to these atrocities, hundreds of thousands of people fled to the bordering country of Kenya as a result (Bradbury, 2008).

The people who fled in the 1990's and who are still fleeing today are legally considered "refugees". Refugees are "people who have fled their countries due to fear of political, religious, or ethnic prosecution" (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003). Many Somali refugees fled to Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Under international law Kenya must provide asylum to Somali refugees (Shapiro, 2016). Dadaab is about 50 miles from the border between Somalia and Kenya. Today Dadaab is home to more than 500,000 people. Initially, around 90,000 arrived in Kenya as refugees, but more people travelled to Kenya as conflict continued in Somalia. Dadaab is comprised of 5 towns that orbit the original settlement. Life in Dadaab is extremely difficult. People's homes are made of mud, sticks and plastic. Some people have described Dadaab as "slum like". There is little food or water available in the refugee camp and only basic education and health services are offered. The United Nations is responsible for running the camp. They offer supplies for the basics to keep people *alive*, not thrive (Roble & Rutledge, 2008). Many Somali refugees who have lived in Dadaab have come to Minnesota.

Minnesota has a long history of accepting refugees. After World War II, Minnesota established its own citizen's committee soon after the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 was passed. This was the beginning for Minnesota of accepting refugees from all over the world, especially from Southeast Asia, Soviet States, and most recently African countries (Fennelly, 2005). Today Minnesota is home to thousands of Somali people, and many have come here as refugees and even more have been born here from immigrant parents. Some estimates says that close to 100,000 people of Somali descent live in Minnesota (Roble & Rutledge, 2008). Minnesota is unique because it has a higher proportion of immigrants who are refugees in comparison to other states. Minnesota does not have a large immigrant population in general, unlike other states such as California, New York, or Texas. However, things have been changing over the past few decades with large increases in the proportion of refugees. For example, the foreign born population in Minnesota grew 130% between 1990 and 2000, compared to 57% nationally (Fennelly, 2005). This is because of the influx of Somali refugees to Minnesota, which had a big impact of Minnesota's immigrant population. With this basic knowledge of the country of Somalia and the experience of Somali refugees we can better understand the questions being asked in this study.

Resettlement Process via the VOLAG system

All refugees who arrive in the United States go through the same process no matter what country they come from. In the United States we use a complex network that includes the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the State Department, and many non-profit organizations that contract with the federal government to resettle refugees. Part of this study seeks to identify if voluntary agencies, or VOLAGs, have any

effects on refugees and offers some changes that can be made to refugee resettlement policies in the U.S.

Before we analyze the VOLAG system we must first understand the process a refugee goes through before resettlement. Once a refugee has been displaced from their home country they are registered with the UNHCR in a refugee camp or in a city or town where refugees may be staying. Once a refugee is registered they will be referred to a country of resettlement by either the UNHCR or a country's embassy. If a refugee is referred to be resettled in the U.S. by the UNHCR or a U.S. embassy then they will be given "priority processing". During their time in the refugee camps refugees will be interviewed and vetted by the government that they have been referred to. This process can often take up to two or more years (Darrow, 2015). Refugees also undergo medical screenings while they stay in the camps. Refugees enter the U.S. with approval from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office (USCIS), which is part of the State Department. After a refugee is approved for travel the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is within the Department of Health and Human Services, will decide which refugee populations will be assisted by which VOLAGs (Darrow, 2015).

Nine VOLAGs exist in the U.S. to resettle tens of thousands of refugees each year. In Minnesota we have five affiliates of the nine organizations present: Catholic Charities, International Institute of Minnesota, Lutheran Social Services, Minnesota Council of Churches, and Arrive Ministries. Each has a national office and state offices; some national offices rename their local offices (Minnesota Department of Health, 2016). Meetings in closed-door sessions between the State Department and the nine VOLAGs occur every

week in order for the ORR to distribute the refugees to each VOLAG. Local VOLAGs will submit documentation for a specific number of cases that they can take giving their national affiliate a projection based on available housing and services available (Mott, 2010). Once a refugee is approved they are assigned to a VOLAG through the ORR, who will then assign them to a city that they operate in. Travel arrangements are scheduled and refugees are given work permits. VOLAGs have little control over how many and which clients they receive, especially individual local offices (Darrow, 2015). Once a refugee lands on U.S. soil the resettlement process begins. National VOLAG offices work jointly with local offices to resettle refugees. They are responsible for finding housing, employment, English education, health services, and other services for their clients (Mott, 2010).

Clearly, VOLAGs are given a great deal of responsibility to successfully resettle refugees and help them on their path to be successful in the U.S. VOLAGs follow systematic procedures for resettlement that are dictated by the 1980 Refugee Act. The Refugee Act was created to measure refugee resettlement outcomes as well as standardize services that refugee's receive (Darrow, 2015). Because federal taxpayer dollars help fund VOLAGs and the entire refugee resettlement process in the U.S., we should closely study and analyze VOLAGs to see if they have any effects on their clients. After a thorough literature review I have identified multiple effects that VOLAGs have on their clients. The first effect is that VOLAGs give primacy to the push for employment upon resettlement with little attention paid to economic advancement through education. The second effect identified is that VOLAGs use performance standards to measure employee outcomes of getting clients to engage in routine practices. These performance measures can result in clients being pressured to meet routine goals, rather than focusing on individual goals that may be best

for clients. It is worth mentioning that it is possible that VOLAGs have a strong effect on geographic resettlement patterns. These resettlement patterns may have consequences to refugee populations who are consistently resettled in marginalized neighborhoods in urban areas. However, there are other factors like social capital and secondary migration that can strongly affect resettlement patterns. These specific factors will be later studied in this paper.

The first effect that VOLAGs have on refugees is the stress placed on finding work as soon as possible. This is because the 1980 Refugee Act has an end goal of economic self-sufficiency, which is defined as “not relying on public aid” (Darrow, 2015). The majority of federal funding for VOLAGs is directed towards employment programs. Federal money funds local non-profit organizations to act as employment counselors for refugees. This can have consequences because often times many refugees are placed into low-income, dead-end jobs with no opportunity for upward mobility in the workforce (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003). For example, many refugees in Minnesota work in factory jobs or meat processing plants that pay very low wages. This is problematic because the majority of refugees already face increased difficulties when trying to find a job, such as limited English ability, work experience not aligned with U.S. culture, and mental health issues. Unfortunately, little regard of economic advancement via education is given to refugees even though education and English speaking ability are considered to be some of the greatest influences that can help improve refugee economic status (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003).

The second affect that VOLAGs have on their clients is that these organizations use employee performance standards to measure outcomes of refugee’s integration into the

community. This can result in clients being pressured to meet basic routine goals of resettlement rather than meeting individual goals that may be best for a client. Jessica Darrow, who conducted a study using a street-level perspective to analyze refugee resettlement, determined that these standards incentivized employees to sort clients into groups, distribute limited resources, screen clients who were most likely to succeed, and reward clients for compliance. She concluded that because of these practices refugees were often times pressured into getting employed as soon as possible and meeting bare-minimum goals for compliance (Darrow, 2015). These performance standards helped to encourage the primary goal of quick employment that was already discussed earlier. This is also problematic because an individual refugee may be able to better integrate into the U.S. by focusing on a specific individual need. For some refugees that may be higher education, for others it may be improving their English skills, and for others it may be to overcome mental health issues before tackling other problems.

It was mentioned previously that VOLAGs might have a large impact on resettlement patterns and where refugees are placed. Some studies have shown that refugees who enter certain communities, like suburban ones, “may be able to achieve favorable neighborhood amenities” (Alba et al., 1999). However, other studies have shown that living in a specific neighborhood is not beneficial to refugees. This paper tries to determine if living in a suburban environment can benefit refugees. Refugees are an integral part in our communities and our investment into refugees is critical for the long-term future well being of our country. Therefore, we should make sure that the resettlement process is the best it can be. We have already identified two effects that VOLAGs have on refugees by asking critical questions. We can also ask other important questions. For example: Is there

too much emphasis placed on certain factors when refugees are resettled? Can being resettled in suburban versus urban communities be advantageous to Somali refugees?

Interview with Fartun Abdi

To gain a better perspective of how VOLAGs function in Minnesota I interviewed Fartun Abdi. Ms. Abdi works at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS), one of several resettlement agencies in Minneapolis. Ms. Abdi works as an immigration specialist at LSS. I interviewed Ms. Abdi at her office in November of 2016. I asked Ms. Abdi many questions about LSS and how their organization operates. In addition, I also asked Ms. Abdi about her professional opinion on some of the inquiries that this study is pursuing. For example, whether the resettlement process puts too much emphasis on specific factors or whether living in suburban versus urban communities may have positive impacts on refugees. I will paraphrase what I learned and what Ms. Abdi spoke about in this section.

To begin, LSS offers many other services in addition to its role as a resettlement agency. LSS has services that can help people dealing with issues related to housing, finances, employment, adoption, disability services, and other immigration problems. LSS is required to work with refugees for 90 days upon their arrival. Within that three-month timeframe LSS will help secure housing for their clients, connect them to their employment counselors, they will register children for school, as well as help them begin to receive cash assistance. LSS is also responsible for giving their clients a cultural orientation. This includes teaching them about Minneapolis, how to recite their address and phone number, and how to use the public transportation system. LSS normally resettles 430 refugees in Minneapolis and 225 refugees in St. Cloud each year. However, the number can fluctuate.

Minnesota is specifically categorized as a family reunification state. That means almost all refugees coming here have immediate family or other relatives who have already been resettled in Minnesota. Housing for refugees is chosen based on availability of affordable housing. LSS has very little prep time so they must accept any housing that is affordable and meets safety and cleanliness standards, regardless of location. The average arrival notice time is 10-14 days, but most recently LSS has only had 5-7 working days to prepare for families. This makes it “nearly impossible to be selective about housing” according to Ms. Abdi.

When I asked Ms. Abdi about whether she thought the resettlement process was successful she responded with great enthusiasm. She mentioned that many people are vetted very carefully and that because of Minnesota’s family reunification status, many people are reunited with their loved ones. When asked about what changes should be made to the resettlement process Ms. Abdi spoke about her wish that the process could be sped-up. She noted that there is an extremely high need for refugees to be resettled across the world, but there are very few spots available. I also asked Ms. Abdi about her opinion on the pros and cons of large immigrant communities like Cedar-Riverside. Her response was characterized by many social capital benefits that Somali people may have by living in Cedar-Riverside. Ms. Abdi spoke about how there are many Somali businesses in the area and how there are many people who have been through similar experiences as refugees. She noted that this gives a greater level of comfort for incoming Somali refugees. She said the most beneficial thing that a refugee may gain by living in an immigrant community is that:

You tend to integrate into the community a little bit more when you have someone who was there before you, who knows the language [English], who speaks the same language as you [Somali], who is trying to help you out.

Interestingly, the cons that Ms. Abdi mentioned were mostly related to people who may be averse to refugees or immigrants. Ms. Abdi made a note that some people may feel hostility towards refugees moving into neighborhoods because they are different from others in terms of skin color, practicing a different religion, or speaking a different language. I continued to ask Ms. Abdi if there was too much emphasis placed on certain factors when refugees are resettled. She felt that the biggest emphasis is “to get them on their feet”. She meant that the first few days refugees will spend time getting situated with their new homes and neighborhoods and then very quickly they will focus on finding employment and enrolling in English classes. She explained that those factors are emphasized the most because they are helpful for quicker integration into the community. I next asked Ms. Abdi if emphasis should be placed on other factors instead. She answered by saying that increasing the amount of time allotted for refugees to resettle is a factor that should be given more consideration. She explained that the 90 days might not be enough time for some refugees and 120 days may be better because:

Some people when they resettle it could just be a single mom with 8 children. So a person like that when you’re just giving her 90 days to pay her rent, when you are giving her 90 days to go to class and learn something and get a job when she has 8

young kids, one year apart it's very hard. So for those kinds of people I am very sympathetic and I wish there was more time and money for them, but honestly there isn't. The goal is to get them up, get them moving, get them integrated as fast as you can because you know it's tough, but they're tough people. They have seen worse.

I next asked Ms. Abdi if living in suburban communities could be in any way beneficial to Somali refugees. Ms. Abdi thought that living in a suburban community could be beneficial to Somali refugees. She based most of this answer on the assumption that wealthier, suburban schools may have higher quality education. She cited "better funding, computers, books, more time for students, and less students" as elements that improve the quality of education. In terms of practicality, she was unsure if living in a suburban area would be beneficial because some suburban areas have higher rents than urban areas. I then asked Ms. Abdi if LSS uses any performance measures to meet standards. Ms. Abdi was not able to give me a detailed answer on this question. However, she did mention that LSS follows very strict tracking systems because they are consistently audited. She stated that every little detail about a client is case noted over time and that that information is stored in a client's file. She also mentioned that LSS is required to resettle a certain number of refugees each year. I followed up by asking her if these performance measures were motivating or inhibiting to the work of individual caseworkers. Again, she was not able to give me a detailed answer, but she spoke about how most recently LSS has hired more case managers, which has lightened the workload of individual caseworkers. This has allowed for different workers to be assigned specific families and for work responsibilities to be

evenly divided among employees. She said that this “allows for a better flow and better work to be done”. That question concluded my interview with Ms. Abdi.

After gaining a professional opinion about the resettlement process via the VOLAG system can we answer our primary research question: Can being resettled in suburban versus urban communities be advantageous to Somali refugees? And the additional question: Is there too much emphasis placed on certain factors when refugees are resettled? After interviewing Ms. Abdi I don’t think we are able to clearly answer these questions. Nonetheless, some answers seem to be forming. When asked about whether certain factors are given too much focus upon resettlement Ms. Abdi confirmed that employment is the number one priority. However, she did not necessarily advocate for emphasis to be placed on factors like education. Instead, she expressed concern for the little amount of time that refugees are given when they are resettled. Ms. Abdi did speak to me about how important English education is when refugees are resettled. We can determine with her answer that rapid employment is a top concern for refugees when they are resettled. Thus, we should consider if other factors, specifically education, should be given more emphasis.

When asked if refugees can benefit from living in suburban communities Ms. Abdi answered with an affirmative yes. She based her decision off of the assumption that suburban cities may have better funded schools, which may benefit children whose parents are refugees. Ms. Abdi was also skeptical about the higher cost of living in suburban communities. This should also be taken into consideration when studying whether refugees can benefit from living in suburban versus urban environments. It also appears that LSS does not have a lot of control over where refugees are resettled geographically.

This suggests that LSS does not play a key role in resettlement patterns. In addition to education and housing prices, other factors should be studied as well to continue to develop a thorough answer to our research question. For example, household income, owning vs. renting a home, income based on salary vs. hourly wage, and how many cars a household has, are all good measures of economic status that may be able to tell us if resettling refugees in a specific community may or may not be beneficial (Turner & Luea, 2009; Neelakantan et al., 2010). Ms. Abdi also confirmed that LSS uses performance measures to meet standards. She described how all of their work is cataloged and how the responsibilities are divided among individual caseworkers. She said that having more caseworkers makes it easier and more efficient to give LSS the ability to serve their clients to the best of their ability. We can discern with this response that the performance measures that LSS uses seem to have positive impacts on their workers. After interviewing Ms. Abdi it appears that rapid employment does seem to be the number one concern for refugees. Also, it seems possible that resettling refugees in suburban areas may offer positive effects. However, more research is still needed in order to find clear answers to these questions.

Comparison between Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside

To gain a deeper analysis of our primary research question, I collected and compared census and education data from the Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside Communities. These two communities were selected because they both have very large Somali populations. Eden Prairie has the third largest Somali population in Minnesota with St. Paul coming in second place and Minneapolis in first (Smith, 2014). However, Cedar-

Riverside and Eden Prairie are two very different communities economically. The median income of Eden Prairie residents is \$93,000 dollars. In comparison Cedar-Riverside residents have a median income of \$13,950 dollars (Smith, 2014). Also, they are both different ethnically. Eden Prairie's population is 80% white, while Cedar-Riverside maintains a more diverse population with 35.3% being white and 64.7% being persons of color (Smith, 2014). Because Cedar-Riverside and Eden Prairie both have very large Somali populations, but are so different economically I began to wonder if resettling future Somali refugees in either city would have certain effects on refugees.

I think Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside will make for a good case study in order to answer our research question so I began by comparing these two communities by analyzing education data from Eden Prairie High School and Minneapolis South High School. Later, I will compare and analyze census data. Minneapolis South was chosen because it is the high school that services the Cedar-Riverside and surrounding neighborhoods. I also compared these schools to statewide data to determine if there were any major differences for Somali students at each school. The data was taken from the Minnesota Report Card website, the public website that compiles all of the standardized test information and other demographic data of each public school in the State. Studying education data is important because a good quality education can be very beneficial to the children of refugees. If one school seems to have better results compared to the other this may give reason to suggest that refugees should be resettled in a suburban or urban area in order for their children to have access to the benefits of a good education.

In order to correctly answer our research question we should seek out data that specifically measures demographic characteristics and education statistics of Somali people living in Cedar-Riverside and Eden Prairie. Unfortunately, that data does not exist. This leads us interpret other data sets in a way in which we can be confident that we are examining information of Somali people. The Minnesota Report Card and U.S. Census does not give a lot of detail when distinguishing students based on their ethnicity. Students are divided between “White (Non-Hispanic)”, “Asian/Pacific Islander”, “Hispanic”, “Black or African American”, or “American Indian”. Therefore, we must establish why it is safe to use the “Black” cohorts of education and census data when studying Somali residents in both communities. We can safely use the “Black” cohort to study Somali residents in Eden Prairie because the majority of black people living in Eden Prairie are of Somali descent. The Somali population in Eden Prairie is estimated between 3,500 to 5,000 people (Smith, 2014). This estimate matches the 3,391 black respondents of the 2014 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Since a Somali person responding to the census would be forced to choose the Black/African-American designation we can safely use that cohort when studying Eden Prairie. Likewise, in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood Somali’s make up the largest ethnic group for black residents. In addition, 72% of students who live in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood attend Minneapolis South High School, which is meant to service that area (Minneapolis Public Schools, 2016). Therefore, we can safely use the “Black” cohort when studying Somali people in Cedar-Riverside. When comparing these two schools several measurements were collected and analyzed. The graduation rate, college going rate, and proficiency rates in math, reading, and science were all compared for Somali students at both schools.

After a review of this data a few things are worth pointing out. Minneapolis South High School had a higher graduation rate of 70.5% for its Somali students compared to Eden Prairie High School, which had a graduation rate of 68.1% (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016) However, it is important to note that a difference of two percentage points is not significant enough to be considered an advantage for attending Minneapolis South. Both schools had higher graduation rates than the State average. Eden Prairie High School had a slightly higher college going rate of 85.0% in comparison to Minneapolis South with 83.0% (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). Again a difference of two percentage points may not be big enough to determine which school is better for a student in regards to attending college in the future. Both schools outperformed the state average in college going rates.

When examining proficiency rates there are major differences between Eden Prairie High School and Minneapolis South for its Somali students. Students at Eden Prairie had higher proficiency rates in all three subjects in comparison to students at Minneapolis South. In math the proficiency rate was 23.4% at Eden Prairie compared to 15.4% at Minneapolis South. In reading the proficiency rate was 39.1% at Eden Prairie compared to 27.8% at Minneapolis South. In science the proficiency rate was 30.4% at Eden Prairie compared to 8.3% at Minneapolis South (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). Eden Prairie High School had higher proficiency rates in reading and science compared to state averages, but a lower proficiency rate in math compared to the state average. Minneapolis South was below the state average in all three subjects (Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). All of this data is presented in the data tables below. When taking all of this into consideration it appears that Somali students attending Eden Prairie High School

have higher proficiency rates in three core school subjects and have extremely similar graduation and college going rates compared to their peers at Minneapolis South High School. With this data we can conclude that being resettled in suburban communities may be advantageous to refugees because an overall better education may be available for their children due to higher proficiency rates and strong graduation and college going rates.

Minnesota Report Card Education Data for Somali Students			
	Eden Prairie High School	Minneapolis South High School	Minnesota State Average
Graduation Rate (2015)	68.1%	70.5%	62.0%
College Going Rate (2014)	85.0%	83.0%	67.0%

Student Proficiency Rates for Somali Students in Grade 11 in 2015			
	Eden Prairie High School	Minneapolis South High School	Minnesota State Average
Math	23.4%	15.4%	33.0%
Reading	39.1%	27.8%	34.6%
Science	30.4%	8.3%	25.2%

I continued to study these two communities by analyzing census data in order to determine if there were any noticeable demographic differences between Somali residents in both of these communities. If there are noticeable, positive demographic differences in a specific community such as income or employment status, then this may give reason to suggest that refugees should be resettled in suburban or urban areas. Multiple demographic measurements were gathered to compare Somali people in these two

different communities. In this study I compared the percentage of residents with a high school education or higher, median household income, the number of households receiving SNAP benefits, median rent, mode of transportation to work, employment status, whether people rented versus owned their home, and geographic mobility. I selected these measurements because I believe they are indicative of successful economic integration into the United States. Certain measures like income are obvious to be indicative of economic status, but others like renting versus owning a home, or owning a car, or receiving welfare are also good variables to consider when studying Somali residents in both communities.

After reviewing these demographic variables in both communities some distinguishing features are apparent. Both communities had a very young median age that was in the 20's. Eden Prairie had a higher percentage of residents that had a high school education or greater. 63.2% of Cedar-Riverside residents had obtained a GED or higher, compared to Eden Prairie's 97.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The median household income of residents was very different. Eden Prairie had a median household income of \$37,162 while Cedar-Riverside had a median household income of \$12,994 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Another major difference was the number of households that received SNAP benefits in the past twelve months. Eden Prairie had a total of 417 households compared to Cedar-Riverside, which had 761 households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The median rent of these two communities is starkly different as well. Eden Prairie has a higher median rent of \$1,154 compared to Cedar-Riverside's median rent of \$568 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). It is clear that there are major differences between these demographic variables in each community.

Other measurements also demonstrate major differences. In Eden Prairie 83.9% of residents drove a car to work. The rest either used public transportation or carpooled to get to work. In Cedar-Riverside only 40.8% of residents drove a car to work. A significant amount of residents, 26.6% to be exact, chose public transportation to get to work. 9.3% carpooled to work and 14.4% reported that they walked to get to their workplace (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). There are also differences among the employment status for residents in both communities. In Eden Prairie 73.5% reported being in the labour force with 26.5% reporting that they were not in the labor force. More specifically, 66.1% were employed and 7.5% were unemployed. In Cedar-Riverside 65.1% were in the labor force while 34.9% were not. More specifically, 50.2% reported to be employed and 14.9% reported to be unemployed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Another noticeable difference was the percentage of people who own or rent their homes. In Eden Prairie 16.1% of residents were renting a home and 83.9% owned their home. In comparison, 99% of residents in Cedar-Riverside rented (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Lastly, the geographic mobility of residents also contains differences. In Eden Prairie 74.8% of residents resided in the same home one year prior. In addition, 1.7% of residents had moved to Eden Prairie from another state. In Cedar-Riverside 69.5% of residents resided in the same home one year prior. Also, Cedar-Riverside had a higher percentage of residents who moved from another state with 10.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). All of this data is presented in the data tables below.

These figures represent some major distinctions between these two communities. In comparison to Cedar-Riverside, Somali residents in Eden Prairie had a higher median household income, were more educated, used less welfare, and they were more likely to be

employed. However, the median rent in Eden Prairie was more than double the median rent in Cedar-Riverside, this suggests that Eden Prairie has a higher cost of living. These factors suggest that residents in Eden Prairie have a higher economic status. Other factors that can be used to determine economic status were also distinguishable. More people in Eden Prairie used a car to drive to work and more also owned their own homes instead of renting. This also suggests a higher economic status of Eden Prairie residents. Lastly, in Eden Prairie more people lived in the same household as one-year prior and less people had moved from a different state. This may suggest more stability of Eden Prairie residents. Does this mean Cedar-Riverside has more residents who were already resettled in different states before moving into their neighborhood? This question deserves further inquiry. From this data we can conclude that being resettled in suburban communities may be advantageous to refugees because Somali residents of Eden Prairie displayed a higher economic status than residents in Cedar-Riverside.

General U.S. Census Data for Somali People in 2014		
	Eden Prairie	Cedar-Riverside
Median Age	21.5	28.4
Percent High School Graduate or higher	97.3%	63.2%
Median Household Income	\$37,162	\$12,994
Households who received SNAP in past 12 months	417	761
Median Rent	\$1,154	\$568

Transportation to Work for Somali People in 2014		
	Eden Prairie	Cedar-Riverside
Drove	83.9%	40.8%
Public Transportation	6.3%	26.6%
Walked	0.0%	14.0%
Carpooled	8.4%	9.3%

Employment Status for Somali People Age 16+		
	Eden Prairie	Cedar-Riverside
In the Labor Force (ages 16-64)	73.5%	65.1%
Employed	66.1%	50.2%
Unemployed	7.5%	14.9%
Not in Labor Force	26.5%	34.9%

Percent of Somali People Who Rent vs. Own Their Home		
	Eden Prairie	Cedar-Riverside
Renters	16.1%	99.0%
Owners	83.9%	1.0%

Geographic Mobility for Somali People		
	Eden Prairie	Cedar-Riverside
In the same house 1 year ago	74.8%	69.5%
Moved from a different state	1.7%	10.5%

Survey Review

Further study is still needed to answer our primary research question. In order to do this I created a survey for Somali residents of Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside to complete. This survey was intended to gauge the lifestyle, economic characteristics, employment perspectives, and other measures of Somali residents in both communities. I used the Qualtrics software that is provided by the University of Minnesota to its undergraduate students to create my survey. The survey was built online and respondents also completed the survey online. In order to take the survey respondents were required to be Somali residents of either community and must have been over the age of 18. Respondents were not compensated for completing the survey. A total of 30 questions

were asked to respondents, however an answer was not required for a respondent to continue taking the survey. I asked questions to confirm that respondents were indeed Somali and residents of either community as well as the proper age. I continued to ask respondents their age, sex, and if they were born in Minnesota or came from somewhere else prior to living in Minnesota. I next asked respondents if they lived in an apartment or house and what the size of their household was. I asked this question because I think that renting versus owning a home is a strong indicator of economic status. I also asked if the respondent's parents worked, what type of job industry they worked in, if they were paid hourly or by salary, and what their household income was. These questions were asked in order to gauge if respondents from either community displayed distinctive demographic differences. I next asked whether respondent's families used SNAP or other welfare benefits currently or in the past. I also asked how many vehicles their families owned along with the educational attainment and English proficiency of their parents. Once again these questions were asked because I believe if there are strong differences in the answers to these questions, then that is likely indicative of certain benefits or advantages that residents may enjoy as a result of living in those respective communities. I continued by asking the respondents what their own educational attainment and English proficiency was along with asking if they were currently working. I finished by asking respondents if they thought that there was a strong Somali community in their place of residence, what they thought of as benefits and disadvantages to living in their communities, if they enjoyed living in their community, the reason for living in that community, if they have experienced racism or xenophobia in their community, if they consider their community a safe place to raise a family, and lastly if they enjoy the quality of life in their place of residence. I asked

these questions to determine general feelings that respondents had towards their respective communities and why they chose to live there. I also asked these questions in order to understand possible reasons or characteristics of these communities that I may have overlooked by studying census and education data.

In order to recruit respondents for this survey I contacted the Somali Student Association student group at the University of Minnesota and asked for permission to speak at one of their meetings in order to recruit participants. At this meeting people were told that they must be Somali, be over the age of 18, and be a resident of either community to participate in the survey. In addition, respondents were also encouraged to contact family and friends who may also be eligible to participate in the survey. I used this “snow ball” technique in order to receive as many responses to the survey as possible. Respondents were given the web link in order to access the survey and were reminded that there is no compensation for completing the survey. I also briefly summarized what types of questions were in the survey and why I was motivated to study the topics in this paper. I recruited participants in early February of 2017 and I closed the survey in early March of 2017. After having a one-month window period for people to respond, a total of two people completed the survey.

One respondent was a resident of Cedar-Riverside and the other was a resident of Eden Prairie. Both respondents were born in Minnesota. The resident from Cedar-Riverside was a female who was 21 years old. The Cedar-Riverside resident’s family lived in an apartment and had a family household size of 4 people. Both of her parents worked, one parent worked in customer service and the other worked in retail. Both of her parents were

paid hourly wages and they had a combined household income of \$60,000. Her family had not in the past year, nor was currently using public assistance benefits. Her family owned one car. Her parents had an educational attainment reported as “some college” and a “High school or GED equivalent”. She reported her parents to have “proficient” levels of English ability. The respondent categorized herself as a native English speaker. The Cedar-Riverside resident had graduated high school and is currently enrolled in college and is also working. She responded that “definitely yes” there is a strong Somali community in Cedar-Riverside. She reported that some benefits of living in Cedar-Riverside included the nearby religious centers, Somali based community organizations, and public transportation. She noted that some disadvantages of Cedar-Riverside were crime and “negative attitudes towards cedar-riverside from white people”. She responded with “probably yes” to the question of whether she enjoyed living in her community. When answering why her family chose to reside in Cedar-Riverside she said: “My parents can afford living in an apartment in this area, also they wanted to live close to many other Somali people and mosques and other Somali organizations. Also my parents have a lot of Somali friends who live close by and in other parts of Minneapolis”. When asked if she had ever experienced racism, xenophobia or islamophobia in her place of residence she responded “definitely yes”. When asked if she considered her place of residence a safe community to raise a family she responded with “probably yes”. Lastly, when asked if she enjoyed the quality of life in her place of residence she answered with “probably yes”.

The resident from Eden Prairie was a male who was 22 years old. His family lived in a house in Eden Prairie and had a family of 5 people. Both of his parents worked, one parent worked in engineering and another parent also worked in retail. Both of his parents

were paid salary jobs with a combined household income of \$100,000. His family had not, nor currently was using public assistance benefits. His family owned two cars. His parents had an educational attainment reported as a “4 year degree” and a “High school or GED equivalent”. He categorized his parents as being “advanced proficient” in English. He reported that he is a native English speaker. The Eden Prairie resident reported that he had graduated high school and is currently in college as well as working. When asked if there was a strong Somali community in Eden Prairie he reported “probably yes”. He listed “good schools” as the only benefit to living in Eden Prairie. He noted “experiences of xenophobia in a majority white, Christian community” as a disadvantage to living in Eden Prairie. He responded with “probably yes” when asked if he enjoyed living in his place of residence. When asked why his family chose to live in Eden Prairie he said: “my family chose to move to Eden Prairie for the suburban atmosphere because to them this was a part of achieving the American dream, also there are good schools and other services like malls, grocery stores, etc...”. He responded with “definitely yes” when asked if he had ever experienced instances of racism, xenophobia, or islamophobia in his place of residence. When asked if he considered Eden Prairie a safe community to raise a family he chose “definitely yes”. Finally, when asked if he enjoyed the quality of life in Eden Prairie he answered with “definitely yes”.

Unfortunately there were only two respondents to this self-reporting survey and therefore we cannot rely on such a small sample to make broad, definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, there are still noticeable differences in the answers of these responses that demonstrate differences of Somali people living in Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside. The Eden Prairie resident reported a higher household income of \$100,000 in comparison to

the Cedar-Riverside resident whose family was reported to earn \$60,000. In addition, the parents of the Eden Prairie resident also were paid salaries in comparison to the hourly wages of the parents of the Cedar-Riverside resident. These responses are indicative that Somali residents living in Eden Prairie may have access to higher paying jobs and may be able to improve their economic status by living in a suburban community. There are also additional factors that may be representative of higher economic status for Somali residents. For example, the family of the resident of Eden Prairie owned their own home as well as owned two cars while the family of the Cedar-Riverside resident rented an apartment and owned one car. Homeownership and access to vehicles is often considered a strong sign of economic status (Neelakantan et al., 2010). Furthermore, the parents of the Eden Prairie resident had achieved slightly higher levels of education in comparison to the parents of the Cedar-Riverside resident. One of the parents of the Eden Prairie resident had a college degree and the other parent had a high school level of education, whereas the parents of the Cedar-Riverside resident were reported to have “some college” experience and a high school level of education. This slightly higher level of education is possibly linked to the higher household income of the Eden Prairie resident. Lastly, the resident of Eden Prairie reported that his parents were “advanced proficient” with their English skills; this is higher than the Cedar-Riverside resident who reported their parents had “proficient” levels of English. Better ability of English can also be useful when achieving higher education as well as a higher earning job. All of these factors help to demonstrate that Somali residents who live in a suburban community may be able to obtain better paying jobs and eventually increase their economic status. This may give reason to resettle future Somali refugees in suburban environments rather than urban ones.

There are also important similarities to point out that complicate this conclusion. Despite the differences of the parents of the respondents, both respondents had graduated high school, were enrolled in college, and were also currently working. Both of the respondents also reported high levels of enjoying living in their respective communities and both thought of their communities as safe places to raise a family. In addition, both respondents negatively attributed experiences of xenophobia as a disadvantage to their respective communities. These similarities demonstrate that the lifestyle that the children of Somali immigrants may have may not be greatly affected by where they grow up. Even though the parents of the respondents were different in terms of education and income, the children still had achieved the same levels of education thus far in their own lives. In addition, there are other important aspects that may influence where Somali people live and work. For example, the resident of Eden Prairie explained that their family chose to reside in Eden Prairie because of the “good schools” and other services that come with suburban living. The family of the Cedar-Riverside equally gave important reasons for choosing to live in Cedar-Riverside. The respondent noted that there are many social reasons, like Somali stores, community centers, and Somali friends, which influenced their family to live in Cedar-Riverside. Clearly, these reasons make it difficult to conclude that resettling future Somali refugees in suburban neighborhoods may be beneficial to Somali people because there are other benefits and influences that make both Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside appealing to Somali people. To reaffirm, we cannot definitively say that resettling refugees in suburban neighborhoods will lead to advantages for refugees, but there does seem to be a link between higher levels of education and income for Somali people living in Eden Prairie compared to Cedar-Riverside. We should further investigate

some of the social aspects that seem to be strongly influential to Somali people to reside in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood to be better able to derive an answer to our primary research question.

Limitations and Additional Factors

After some further research and analysis I determined that there are several limitations and additional factors that do not allow us to definitively say whether Somali refugees may benefit from being resettled in suburban versus urban communities. The primary limitation is that there is a lack reliable data that can offer solid answers to the questions being posed in this paper. I recommend that more data about refugees should be collected in order to find answers to these questions. Additionally, there are other factors that make it difficult to measure “benefits” between Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside. These factors include: a well-established Somali community in Cedar-Riverside, social capital that makes living in Cedar-Riverside more practical to a Somali refugee, and secondary migration to Minnesota.

Minnesota is well known for its strong economy, welcoming atmosphere towards immigrants, and better social welfare system. These attributes make Minnesota a great place for Somali refugees to be resettled, however Cedar-Riverside specifically has its own characteristics that may influence Somali refugees to reside there. Cindy Horst writes that in Cedar-Riverside “a parallel economy was created that enables Somalis nowadays to do everything ‘the Somali way’” (Horst, 2006). What she means by this is that there are many Somali businesses, non-profits, grocery stores, schools, mosques, restaurants, and other organizations that provide services to Somali people. Abdi Roble and Doug Rutledge

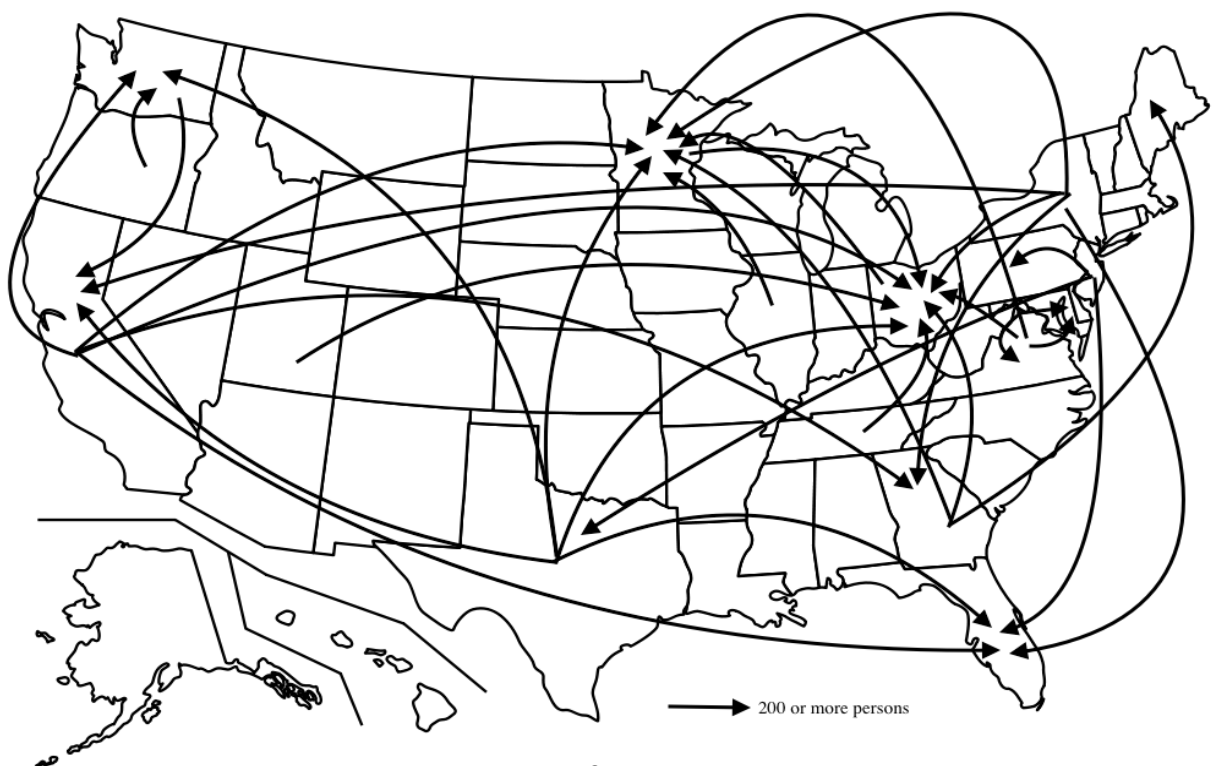
estimate that there are over 600 Somali owned businesses in Minneapolis alone (Roble & Rutledge, 2008). What this leads to is a large Somali community in a concentrated geographic area that is filled with people who speak Somali. This environment makes it very encouraging for Somali people to reside in Cedar-Riverside. It also makes it difficult to measure and codify these factors in order to determine if being resettled in Eden Prairie may be advantageous to refugees. Some factors indicate that it is beneficial to be resettled in a suburban area like Eden Prairie, but the presence of a strong Somali community in Cedar-Riverside also makes Cedar-Riverside seem advantageous to Somali refugees. In addition to this strong community, there is also strong social capital present in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Social capital “refers to the collective value of all ‘social networks’ [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other” (Harvard University, 2014). This social capital includes family and kinship networks. John Bruhn explains that the presence of a group of people in a community that is the same ethnically as you creates feelings of loyalty, mutual trust and obligation, which can facilitate entrepreneurial success. Social capital is important because it makes it easier for new refugees to settle into a community since social networks and infrastructure have already been established by predecessors (Bruhn, 2005). The many businesses and large Somali population that exists in Cedar-Riverside also make it advantageous to Somali refugees coming to Minnesota. Once again it is difficult to measure social capital and therefore we cannot definitively compare Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside.

In addition, secondary migration is also an influential factor. Secondary migration is when refugees are resettled in one location in the United States, but decide to move to another location after being resettled. Secondary migration is very common, especially

among Somali refugees. It is important to note that secondary migration happens on all levels, not just a state-to-state level. Somali refugees may be originally resettled in an urban environment and after several years may be able to move to a more expensive suburban one. This scenario could certainly be happening with Somali people in Minneapolis and Eden Prairie, but once again this is difficult to measure. Cindy Horst estimates that sixty percent of Somalis in Minneapolis came from other states as secondary migrants (Horst, 2006). Many Somali people choose to relocate to Minnesota because of the strong Somali community that exists here and for the social capital reasons already listed above. The reason secondary migration is important to study is because it demonstrates that that refugees may choose to relocate in order to reside in an already well-established community of their own people, and thus resettling refugees in suburban or urban communities may not matter.

We can use data from Tamar Forrest and Lawrence Brown's study to illustrate how Minnesota has been impacted by secondary migration. Forrest and Brown calculated the percentage of dispersal between the lower 48 states to determine which states received the highest percentage of Somali refugees. They did this by dividing the number of Somali arrivals in each particular state over the total number of Somali arrivals for the entire country. The initial resettlement of Somali refugees in 2000 was highly segmented across the U.S. The respective percentages are listed for the states with a significant proportion: MN (15.2), CA (7.9), GA (6.9), TX (6.3), OH (5.6), VA (5.2), NY (4.2), AZ (4.0), WA (4.0), TN (4.0), and MI (3.6). By 2010, the populations shifted significantly to three main states: MN (33.0), OH (10.3), and WA (9.5) (Forrest & Brown, 2014). To have a better understanding of this shift I have created a map that illustrates the secondary migration flows of Somali

refugees, this map is presented below. It is important to note that the top three destination states, Minnesota, Ohio, and Washington, are where particular Somali communities have already been established. Clearly, secondary migration is a powerful factor because immigration may split refugees up, but secondary migration re-concentrates them (Bruhn, 2005). When secondary Somali migrants were surveyed 40% said they chose to relocate to Minneapolis because of “social networks”, 33% said because of “employment opportunities”, and 19% for “educational opportunities” (Forrest & Brown, 2014). This amalgamation of Somali refugees into just three states across the nation demonstrates how social capital and strong communities can influence others to move to another state in order to be with people of one’s own ethnicity. When considering whether refugees should be resettled in urban or suburban communities we should also keep in mind that refugees have the ability to relocate to a new location upon resettlement, and therefore initial location of resettlement may not be of as extreme importance as previously thought.



Policy Outcomes Based on Findings

This paper posits that there is a link between higher education levels and income of Somali people living in a suburban community versus an urban one. However, we cannot precisely conclude that being resettled in a suburban community is correlated to these advantages for Somali people because strong factors like social capital and secondary migration can strongly influence where Somali people tend to reside in the Twin Cities region. Also, there is an absence of strong and reliable data about Somali refugees that allows us to make accurate conclusions about demographic characteristics of Somali refugees in Minnesota. Based on these conclusions should refugee resettlement policies change to purposefully resettle future refugees in suburban communities based on the findings in this paper? I argue yes policies should change to resettle future refugees in suburban communities. Policies should change because there does appear to be a link between better outcomes for the lives of Somali people if they are residing in a suburban community instead of an urban one based on the evidence that is available to us. Refugees should be resettled in an area where they will be most successful. Accepting and resettling refugees is an investment in human capital for the good of our entire nation because the costs of our resettlement programs are outweighed by the great contributions that refugees have to offer our nation.

Some people may disagree with my conclusion that suburban resettlement can make a positive difference, and therefore also disagree with my ideas to change policies to resettle future refugees. However, there is evidence to suggest that the area in which you live in can affect the future of your life. Harvard researchers Raj Chetty and Nathaniel

Hendren studied the effects of neighborhoods on children's earnings in adulthood. They did this by analyzing tax data of more than five million families. They found that children whose parents moved to a "better" neighborhood—i.e., a neighborhood where children of permanent residents at their income percentile have higher earnings in adulthood—earn more themselves in adulthood (Chetty & Hendren, 2015). They attributed that growing up in "better" neighborhoods led to higher earnings in adulthood because children were exposed to less concentrated poverty, less income inequality, better schools, and lower crime rates. They concluded that growing up in a one better standard deviation neighborhood from birth increases a child's income in adulthood by 10% (Chetty & Hendren, 2015). If neighborhoods can affect regular American citizens it can surely affect newly resettled refugees.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper asked the primary research question: Can being resettled in suburban versus urban communities be advantageous to Somali refugees? To answer this question I began with a broad overview of Somali people and the history of their government in Somalia. The VOLAG process was also examined to fully understand how refugees are resettled and what affects the VOLAG system has on refugees. Two effects were found. First, the VOLAG system puts pressure on rapid employment. Second, the VOLAG systems uses performance standards to measure caseworkers, this results in clients being pushed to meet routine goals rather than focusing on individual goals. It is also a possibility that the VOLAG process is influencing resettlement patterns. Next Fartun Abdi of Lutheran Social Services was interviewed to gain a professional opinion about refugee

resettlement and whether she thought resettling refugees in suburban versus urban communities could be beneficial to Somali refugees. She thought that this may be advantageous to refugees because of better schools in suburban cities, but she was not certain. To continue our study in order to find an answer to this question education data and census data of Somali residents was analyzed comparing Eden Prairie, Minnesota and Cedar-Riverside, a neighborhood in Minneapolis. These two communities were chosen because they are very different in terms of income and diversity, but both have large Somali populations. After analyzing education data it was shown that Somali residents at Eden Prairie High School consistently had higher proficiency rates in math, reading and science in comparison to Minneapolis South High School. Eden Prairie High School also had a higher college going rate compared to Minneapolis South. Both schools had a similar graduation rate. This suggests that Somali students in Eden Prairie are able to benefit from a better public education by being residents of Eden Prairie. After analyzing census data it was shown that Somali residents of Eden Prairie had higher incomes, drove their own cars to work, owned their own homes rather than rented, and were more likely to be employed in comparison to Somali residents of Cedar-Riverside. These measurements suggested that Somali residents of Eden Prairie enjoyed a higher economic status. However, due to lack of reliable data we still were not able to develop a clear answer to our research question, so Somali residents of both communities were surveyed to continue our research. With a total of two respondents we found that Somali residents living in Eden Prairie had higher incomes, earned salaries rather than hourly wages, had slightly better education levels and slightly better English abilities. This again suggested that Somali residents in Eden Prairie enjoyed a higher economic status. Nonetheless, there were many additional factors

discovered during the process of this study that were shown to influence the integration of Somali refugees in the Twin Cities such as social capital and secondary migration factors. Therefore, we reached a final conclusion that we cannot definitely say that resettling refugees in a suburban community will be advantageous to future refugees, but there does appear to be a link between higher incomes and education levels of Somali residents living in Eden Prairie compared to Cedar-Riverside. Based on this final conclusion it was recommended that refugee resettlement policy should be changed to resettle future refugees in suburban communities. This policy change may help to create even greater differences than the ones displayed in this paper in the lives of refugees living in suburban areas versus urban areas. If all future refugees are given this opportunity in Minnesota, and across the country, we should expect the Somali community, and our entire nation to grow even more vibrantly.

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Appendices

Interview Questions for Fartun Abdi:

What services does LSS offer to the community?

How many refugees does LSS resettle each year?

How many of those refugees are Somali?

Where are those refugees resettled?

Please describe the “typical” Somali refugee family? What happened to them? Where did they live before coming to the U.S.?

What services does LSS provide to refugees?

After those 90 days what role does LSS play in their lives? Do people come back?

What social services and public aid are refugees granted when they are resettled?

Are they enrolled into English learning classes?

Are they placed into employment?

Please describe the process of refugee resettlement from beginning to end?

How quickly do you get prepared from when you receive the notification?

Is the current resettlement process successful in your opinion?

What changes should be made to the process, if any?

How is the location of resettlement chosen for a refugee, specifically how is Minnesota chosen, and how is the city and even neighborhood chosen?

What are pros and cons to large immigrant communities like Cedar-Riverside?

Is there too much emphasis placed on certain factors of refugees when they are resettled, such as employment, education, or English ability?

Should more emphasis be placed on other factors?

What policy changes should happen to improve the lives and successful futures of Somali refugees in Minnesota? Would you say in general to extend more time or increase the program to get more funding?

What is the biggest barrier to Somali refugees in Minnesota in terms of successfully integrating?

Can living in suburban communities, like Eden Prairie, be in any way beneficial to Somali refugees?

What are the general trends you see in refugee resettlement right now? Who is coming in?

Does LSS use any performance measures to meet standards? If so can you give an example?

Do you have to meet a specific number of people you resettle each year?

Are these performance measures motivating or inhibiting to the work of individual caseworkers?

Qualtrics Survey:

A Study of Somali Residents Living in Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside

A Study of Somali Residents Living in Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside

CONSENT FORM

A Study of Somali Residents Living in Eden Prairie and Cedar-Riverside

You are invited to be in a research study surveying Somali residents of Eden Prairie and the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minnesota. You were selected as a possible participant because of your ethnic Somali background. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Nathan Froemming, Undergraduate Student, Political Science Department, University of Minnesota.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is: To learn whether living in suburban communities like Eden Prairie, Minnesota are beneficial to Somali immigrants in comparison to living in urban communities like the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
Take an online survey and answer all of the questions honestly, accurately, and to

the best of your ability.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

This study has very minimal risks:

First, one risk may be that the questions may make you feel uncomfortable or invoke strong emotions because some questions tend to be quite personal.

Second, some questions may ask you to reflect on negative experiences that you may have had in the past, which may invoke strong emotions. For example, questions like: "Have you ever experienced racism, xenophobia, or islamophobia in your place of residence?".

The benefits to participation are:

The benefits of participating in this research allows you to contribute to the production of a great amount of knowledge to be developed that will hopefully create a positive impact on the perception of the Somali community in the metro area.

Compensation:

You will NOT be compensated.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept completely confidential. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Nathan Froemming. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Nathan at (612) 708-4742 or froem041@umn.edu. You may also contact my advisor: Daniel Kelliher, Department of Political Science. 1414 Social Sciences, 267 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, or at (612) 624-1671 or kelliher@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

By completing the following survey you are consenting to participation in this research.

Are you 18 years or older?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your exact age?

Do you identify as ethnically Somali?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you consider yourself or your family to be a resident of either Eden Prairie, MN or the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood in Minneapolis?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which are you or your family a resident of?

- ☐ Eden Prairie, MN
- ☐ Cedar-Riverside

Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Where you born in Minnesota or did you come from another country or state?

- ☐ Yes, I was born in Minnesota
- ☐ No, I was born outside of Minnesota

If you were not born in Minnesota, where did you reside before coming to Minnesota?

Do you or your family live in an apartment or a house?

- ☐ Apartment
- ☐ House

How many people live in your household or your family's household?

Does one or both of your parents work?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Both

What job industries do your parents work in? (You may select as many as you like)

- ☐ Customer Service
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Food/Restaurant Industry
- ☐ Medical/Health

- ☐ Legal
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Private business owner
- ☐ Unemployed/not seeking work
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Finance/Business/Accounting
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Office/Clerical Work/Administrative
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Information & Technology
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Non-profit
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Other

Are your parents paid hourly or by salary?

- ☐ Hourly
- ☐ Salary

What is the entire household income of your family?

Has your family used or is currently using any public assistance like SNAP or unemployment benefits?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Does your family have a car?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many cars does your family have?

What is the level of educational attainment of your parents? (You may choose multiple options)

- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school or GED equivalent
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ 2 year degree
- ☐ 4 year degree
- ☐ Professional degree
- ☐ Doctorate

What is the level of English proficiency of your parents? (You may choose multiple options)

- ☐ Basic
- ☐ Low intermediate
- ☐ High intermediate

- ☐ Proficient
- ☐ Advanced proficient
- ☐ Native English speaker

What is YOUR level of English proficiency?

- ☐ Basic
- ☐ Low intermediate
- ☐ High intermediate
- ☐ Proficient
- ☐ Advanced Proficient
- ☐ Native English speaker

Did you graduate high school?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you currently in college?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you currently working?

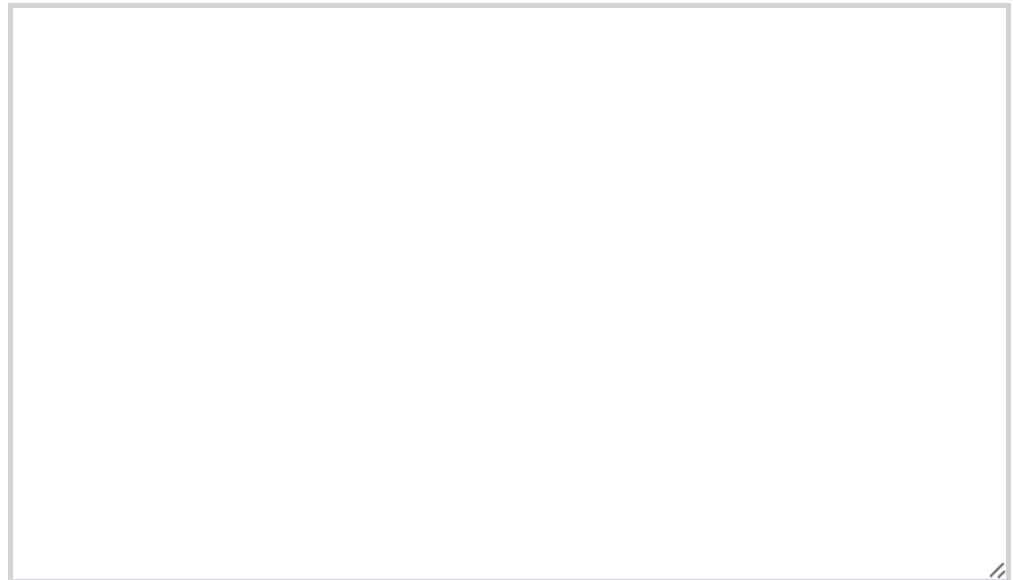
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you feel that there is a strong Somali community within your place of residence?

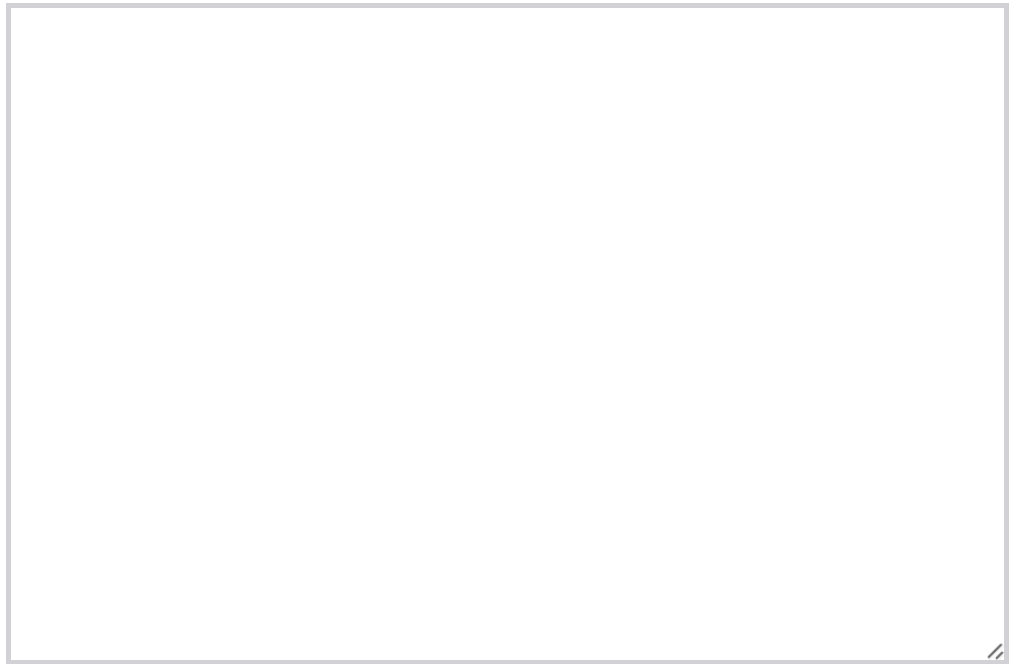
- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not

What are the benefits and disadvantages to where you reside? (Benefits and disadvantages can be anything you consider to be a good or bad thing about your community. Feel free to share them here)

Benefits:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for the user to write their responses regarding the benefits and disadvantages of their residence. The box is positioned to the right of the 'Benefits:' label.

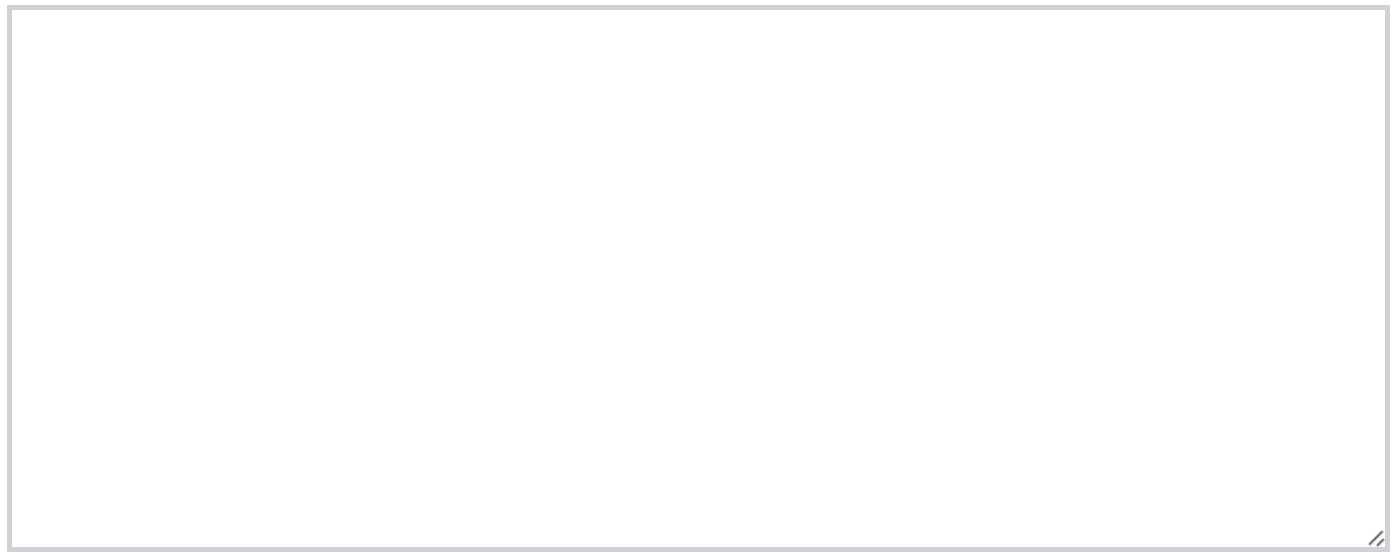
Disadvantages:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for a user to write down disadvantages. In the bottom right corner, there is a small icon of a pencil and a checkmark.

Do you enjoy living in your community?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not

Why did your family choose to reside in either Eden Prairie, MN or Cedar-Riverside? (Reasons related to location to jobs, affordability, school systems, community reasons, etc...)



Have you ever experienced racism, xenophobia, or islamophobia in your place of residence?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not

Do you consider your place of residence a safe community to raise a family?

- ☐ Definitely yes
- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not

Do you enjoy the quality of life in your place of residence?

- ☐ Definitely yes

- ☐ Probably yes
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Probably not
- ☐ Definitely not

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